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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OSLO 000063

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG
AMEMBASSY ATHENS PASS TO AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/05
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [ECON](#) [EFIS](#) [ENRG](#) [RS](#) [NO](#)
SUBJECT: FM Stoere Goes to Moscow

CLASSIFIED BY: James T. Heg, Deputy Chief of Mission; REASON: 1.4(B)

11. (C) Summary: MFA Deputy Director for Northern and Russian Affairs Anne Kjesti Carlsen told PolOff February 5 that FM's Stoere's February 2 trip to Moscow should be viewed as preparatory work for President Medvedev's planned April visit to Norway. She said discussions focused largely on efforts to increase economic cooperation and to conclude up to twelve agreements in time for Medvedev's visit; agreements ranging from new border regulations to increased scientific cooperation. Carlsen said that the Russian-Norwegian disagreement over Barents Sea territory is continuing a "positive drive" towards resolution, while Stoere expressed his dismay to Lavrov over the continued high levels of pollution emitted by smelters in Russian town of Nickel, despite significant Norwegian financing to address the issue. Carlsen said that relations with the U.S. were not a topic of conversation. Media reaction to the visit focused primarily on Stoere's criticism of Russia's recent crack-down on human rights, and his raising with Lavrov the concern over visas being denied for Norwegian Helsinki Committee members. End Summary.

Medvedev to Visit Norway

12. Carlsen told PolOff that Stoere and Lavrov's discussion focused primarily on sixteen bilateral agreements currently in development, with the goal of completing between ten to twelve agreements in time to be announced during Medvedev's visit. The agreements include Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on scientific cooperation, meteorological cooperation, cooperation between Norwegian and Russian police, energy efficiency and renewable energy, and emission reductions. Another MOU in the works which Carlsen said she expected to be completed in time would allow for visa free travel for Norwegian and Russian residents living within a thirty to fifty kilometer radius of the border between the two countries, fostering increased economic activity. She explained that area residents who had been issued specific cards could travel freely back and forth between Norway and Russia, and would rely on the police to catching card-holders if they strayed outside the agreed-upon area. While some risks were involved, Carlsen said, Stoere and Lavrov agreed that the benefits of increased cooperation justified the risk.

Cooperation and Border Disputes

13. (C) Carlsen said that both parties stressed that while that while the development of the giant Shtokman field hinged upon whether or not it made commercial sense, overall broader cooperation on industrial standards in the High North would continue to be addressed. She said both Lavrov and Stoere applauded the great reduction in illegal fishing problems in the High North, noting that Lavrov in particular was satisfied to see that significantly fewer Russian boats were being arrested in the Norwegian Economic Zone.

14. (C) In regards to the on-going Barents Sea border dispute, Carlsen said that the issue was discussed during a Lavrov- Stoere "tete-a-tete" and she had not received a read-out on the meeting. She did note a "continued positive drive in negotiations" to resolve the dispute. She also said that Lavrov and Stoere agreed to disagree on progress made to reduce emissions from the smelters operating in the Russian city of Nickel, located just across the border from Norway. She said Stoere informed Lavrov that the "several years old" agreement between the GoN and Russian partners in Nickel designed to reduce emissions had failed and that he expected the Russian authorities to make an effort to control emissions. Carlsen reported Lavrov offering that emissions from Nickel had been reduced by 40%, to which Stoere responded that they still remain five times higher than Norway's emissions.

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15. (SBU) MFA's press release issued February 3 noted that the two foreign ministers discussed High North cooperation, in particular the Barents Sea fish stocks, environment and nuclear safety , border control, energy, and economic cooperation. They also discussed the Middle-East, Afghanistan, disarmament, and developments in Iran. Carlsen referred to the discussion on international issues as more of a Tour d' Horizon, with significant time devoted to the recent London Conference on Afghanistan that both Lavrov and Stoere had attended. She added that the U.S. relations with Norway and with Russia had not been discussed during the meeting.

Norwegian Press Reaction

16. (SBU) Norwegian press on Stoere's Moscow trip focused primarily on his criticism of Russia's recent crack-down on human rights demonstrators. Stoere told reporters that he would take a "tougher tone" than previously with Lavrov, and raised the recent spate of visa denials for Norwegian researchers in general and specifically for Norwegian Helsinki Committee members. Lavrov is reported to have responded that that he would investigate the situation.

17. (SBU) Press also reported that Stoere met with Memorial's Svetlana Gannusjkina, recently nominated by Hoyre party leader Erna Solberg for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize. Stoere said it was important to hear what she had to say, and to acknowledge her courage and the courage of other human rights activists in Russia. Stoere was quoted as saying Norway had a general uneasiness about the state of Russia's civil society, adding that he had raised his concerns with Lavrov.

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